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## MELVIN VANIMAN'S PICTURES TAKE IN SAN FRANCISCO

His Startling New Photography, First in Evidence Here, is Bringing Him Large Orders in the Coast Metropolis.

(Special to the Advertiser)

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 19.—Melvin Vaniman, the photographer of King Brothers, of Honolulu, has attracted much attention in San Francisco by his startling photographs. Mr. Vaniman has been, with his wife, for several months, at the Ashworth, an apartment house on Mason street. There he has established a workshop, and is turning out a great many remunerative orders. He has done much work for the railroad and transportation companies, the astonishing size of his pictures taking the eye of the passenger agents. Mrs. Vaniman has colored the pictures, and they are making a good deal of money. Just now they are on a visit to Southern California, where Mr. Vaniman will photograph the scenic wonders.

The Sunday Call gives two pages to two of Vaniman's biggest photographs with a description of his methods. It was the Advertiser which first gave prominence to Vaniman's skill. This was when he made his clever pictures of Honolulu Harbor, from the masthead of a ship. The Advertiser reproduced a picture and encouraged Vaniman to go on in his endeavors.

The Call's article is as follows: Loaded to the masthead of a ship, one hundred and thirty feet above the water, with the wind blowing a regular "silver mill" gale, Melvin Vaniman, a plucky photographer of San Francisco, recently accomplished a triumph in securing the largest and most beautiful harbor-city view of Honolulu ever obtained. And thereby he has a tale that is of interest to photographers and laymen alike.

Mr. Vaniman, after years spent in experimenting, has reached a point in photography which has long been striven for unsuccessfully. He has succeeded in making a continuous panoramic picture 20 by 72 inches in size on one plate. The original sizes of the illustrations used in this article are 16 by 8 inches. The picture of Honolulu was taken from the top of a pole 107 feet high.

The other, showing a stretch of city streets reaching from the Emporium to the Hopkins Art Institute, was taken from the Leepalmer building. They are taken on one plate, the camera lenses having been made from special designs in Germany. Until now these large photographs have always been taken in sections and joined together.

Mr. Vaniman followed up this method and used all of the various panoramic cameras. In the joining process all negatives have to be printed exactly alike, the same time of exposure, etc., to make the whole picture perfect. He tried enlarging small negatives, but found that unsatisfactory. Then he set about making a camera of his own, finding that an ordinary one would achieve his object. Since then he has been through a mass of bolts and screws, shutters and lenses, and has made four cameras.

It took him three weeks to make the first one, and with it only two successful pictures were made, in size 7 by 20 inches. Finding these somewhat defective, the camera was thrown aside and a second and larger machine started. This was torn to pieces at least six times, but, after much work, with it was made the most artistic photograph of the famous Fall, near Honolulu, ever produced. Mrs. Vaniman, with the eye of an artist, has colored this picture, making it even more beautiful.

The camera used for these photographs is almost as large as a small trunk. At the time of making the picture of the Fall Captain Mace of the bark Battle Abbey, then at Honolulu, expressed a desire to accompany Mr. Vaniman up the rugged cliffs. He had climbed the Andes and Alps, but had heard from English travelers of the Fall, and wanted to try it.

He was a heavy man, and the method employed in ascending the Fall was calculated to reassure him. The side of the cliff is covered with tangled vegetation and shrubs. The climbers made their toilsome way with a large iron hook secured to the end of a rope. This hook was thrown up as far as possible to catch a hold among the moss and shrubs and the explorers would then pull themselves up by the rope. This process, oft repeated, brought them at last to a ledge at an elevation of 500 feet.

Here the picture was taken, after some time spent in bringing around the doughty captain, who nearly collapsed from his exertions in breathing and climbing. Mr. Vaniman became known in Honolulu as the "trap-shooter" from the aerial methods to which he was often obliged resort in securing his broadest picture effects. In taking a picture of the beach at Waikiki he built a three-cornered portable tower, thirty feet high, somewhat like a windmill.

This was placed in position among the flowering waves, and helped to give the picture a depth not usually seen in such views. This tower cost \$2, and only came into service on this one occasion. But the most thrilling and melodramatic position into which Mr. Vaniman's keen sense in the advancement of photography ever took him was when he spent two and a half hours rocking to and fro at the top of the tallest mast of the bark Gerard C. Tobey, waiting for the great masses of cloud to give the sun a chance, so that he might get the bird's-eye view for which he had risked his life and his limbs.

He tells of his adventures in the following entertaining way: "Well, I am a great 'handlubber,' you know, and I never was much of a climber. I never thought of climbing a mast before in my life. But I wanted that view and it seemed to me that the masthead of that ship was the only place from which to get it. The captain offered me any part of the ship that I might want, but when he found that I was going to climb the mast he advised me not to do it. I tell you there were grinning lot of sailors around when the procession of two started up through the rigging.

been no good for the view, on account of the intervening ropes. Then the captain said down again.

"I was alone, and my hair was standing on end—of course from the wind! I had a wall of good stout rope in my neck, and I looked myself to the mast, a difficult one-handed sort of a job. I tied knots without number and the wind whistled around me and threatened to throw me out into space. My head was whirling from the dizzy height, and my feet were numb. The dizzy-like figure of the sailors below seemed as far off as though in Africa, and the mast swayed back and forth with a quivering motion that was awful!

"The big camera box bobbed about like a pool and threatened to fall into the sea with every pitch. The royal yard wobbled fearfully beneath my feet, and I had to do a sort of sailor's hornpipe step with every lurch to keep my feet where they ought to be. I had a great time getting the camera into position. I supported it on a triangle which I lashed to the mast.

"The wind blew the cap from the lens and I had to use a piece of paper which I found in my pocket. Finally when I got it focused and all ready with the sun shining brightly, a great cloud sailed over the city. It threw the whole view into shadow, and will you believe it, I had to wait up there two hours and a half, with the wind howling at thirty-five miles an hour, before I got a chance to press the lever and take the picture.

"To make sure, I went through the process three times, though with the greatest difficulty. It took one arm to hold on to the mast, and the other to take out the plate holder and replace them. The swaying of the mast rendered it almost impossible to keep the plate horizontal with the view, and two of the plates were spoiled on this account. The third was a success.

"Good luck, I guess, got me down again safely. My nerves needed, and got, about two days in bed afterwards. But I felt repaid with the results I got. If you want to take pictures, go up a ship's mast. You'll enjoy it.

Through a turn of a screw, a camera was another of Mr. Vaniman's experiences in search of the picturesque. He found it in large bunches. He was on his way from Hilo to Waikiki to take a picture for a railway company, and with him was young Edison Mizner of San Francisco. The two were clambering up a side hill, carrying the camera, as big as a trunk, between them. The end of it struck what looked like a big mass of clay, but which turned out to be a hornet's nest in disguise. The air was filled with many things in less than a second. A flying camera, two flying men and hundreds of flying hornets! The lid came off the camera, the light got in it, and no picture was taken that day.

Mr. Vaniman, who starts on a tour of the world shortly, has just received a commission from General Warfield to make a panoramic view from the summit of Mount Tamalpais. Before his return to the world at large will have contributed many beautiful scenes to his camera.

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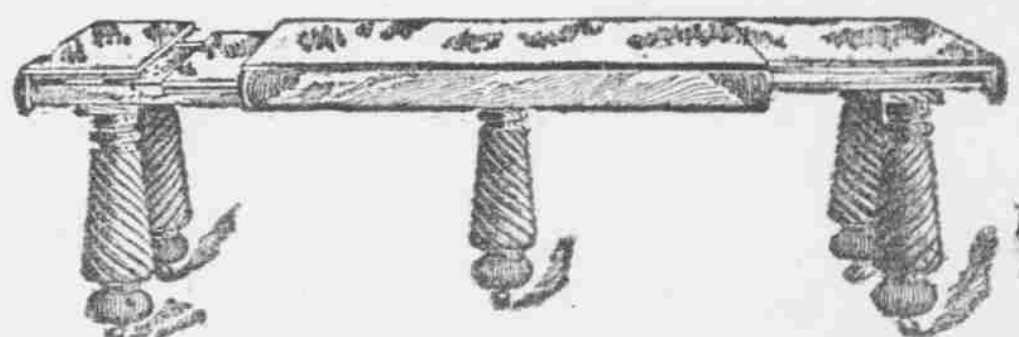
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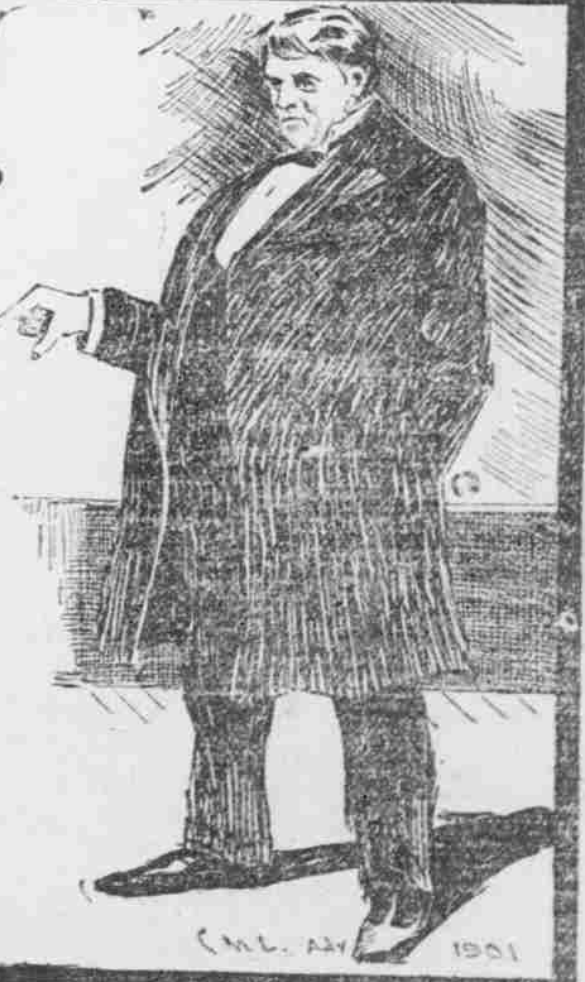
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